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Research and Analysis Branch

R & A No. 1475 SR

THE PROBLEM OF ALBANIA

SECRET
BOARD OF ECONOMIC WARFARE
DOC. No. 51102
COPY No. 1

163063

Description

The marked success of the German soft policy in Albania has placed serious obstacles in the way of any Allied penetration of the Balkans. This report describes the present state of the Albanian resistance movements, analyzes the German political program, and explores the possibilities open to Allied political warfare.

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December 20, 1943

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SUMMARY

Albania, an unusually primitive country ruled by the Turks until 1913, and invaded and occupied by the Italians in 1939, has, since the Balkan campaign of 1941, been the scene of effective guerrilla resistance movements. Nationalist and left-wing groups united in 1942 in a National Liberation Movement, from which a right-wing group has since split off, and has collaborated with the program of the Germans, who occupied the country after the surrender of Italy. This German program has been cleverly designed to win Albanian support, and has succeeded in gaining the services of many normally pro-Allied Albanians. It has by constitutional means provided Albania with a legal government. The Allies are thus faced with a major problem in political warfare. Previous Allied declarations on the future of Albania have failed to answer the outstanding questions on the future of the country. The recognition of Albania as a member of the United Nations would appear to require the establishment of an Albanian government-in-exile. This in turn necessitates a decision on the role to be played by King Zog. Zog's record is mixed, but even his opponents are now prepared to regard him as an ad interim king if he pledges himself not to return to Albania until the Allies have held a plebiscite (by whose decision he must abide) to determine what form of government the people prefer.

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THE PROBLEM OF ALBANIA

I. Albania to mid-1943

The Albanians, of whom there are roughly a million within the 1939 borders of Albania, believe themselves to be descendants of the original Illyrian and Thracian inhabitants of the Balkans. They speak an ancient Indo-European language, not closely related to any other now in use; about seventy percent of them are Muslim, twenty percent Orthodox, and ten percent Roman Catholic. Of the Muslims nearly one third belong to a peculiar sect called the Bektashi, almost Unitarian in their outlook. Virtually ignoring the external religious practices prescribed by the Koran, they are tolerant of all other religions, and for this reason have played a large part in Albanian nationalism, welding together people of diverse faiths. Albania is poor, its natural resources largely undeveloped, its transport and communication facilities meagre, the illiteracy of its people high, and their customs far more primitive than those of any other Western European country.

Conquered by the Turks in the fifteenth century, Albania remained as almost the last Ottoman outpost on the continent, and did not obtain independence until 1913. In 1914 it was ruled briefly by Prince Wilhelm zu Wied, a petty German Prince, appointed by the major European powers. During World War I, however, it became a zone of military operations, and its period of existence as a modern state may therefore be said to date from 1920, when it came under the rule of a Council of Regency for a non-existent king. Ahmed Bey Zogu, Chief of the Mati tribe, was prominent in the new state from the first. He was driven into exile in 1924, when the country came for six months under the liberal and enlightened rule of Bishop Fan

Noli, Harvard graduate since exiled to America. Zog returned, however, to become President of an Albanian Republic in 1925, and King Zog I of a revived Kingdom in 1928. His administration was marked by the continuance of the time-honored Ottoman practices of graft and political assassination, but some social progress was registered. Largely with Zog's connivance, Mussolini's Italy embarked upon a campaign of gradual penetration, conducted by the granting of loans, the exertion of economic pressure, and the substitution of political for financial demands whenever Albania proved unable to meet its obligations. Whenever Zog resisted firmly, Mussolini retreated, but the Italians finally invaded and occupied the country in April, 1939; Zog and his family went into exile; Albania and Italy were united in a dual monarchy under Victor Emmanuel; an Italian Governor General was installed; all the apparatus of Italian Fascism was imported; and the country, though it had a series of collaborationist Cabinets under quisling Premiers, was in fact ruled from Rome.

In October 1940, the Italians invaded Greece from Albania, were pushed back, and were forced to abandon to the Greeks the southern portion of the country, across which a front was stabilized until the Germans invaded the Balkans in 1941. The subsequent Yugoslav defeat enabled the Italians, as a measure of gaining popular approval, to annex to Albania the Kossovo area of South Serbia, long claimed as Albanian. In 1942 and 1943, as the Italian armies approached catastrophe, Mussolini's regime in Albania embarked upon an all out campaign of appeasement designed to win the cooperation of the population. This proved a failure. In fact, Albanian guerrilla resistance to the Italians developed steadily after the Balkan campaign was over, when the bulk of the Italian forces had been transferred elsewhere.

II. The Albanian Resistance Movements: LNC and BK

The techniques and achievements of guerrilla warfare have in general resembled in Albania similar operations elsewhere in the Balkans. Albanian bands, avoiding large-scale engagements, attacked Italian convoys from ambush, destroyed equipment, and captured prisoners. They raided frequently and occupied when possible areas containing resources valuable to the Italians, including pitch deposits, oil wells, and chrome mines. The Italians in retaliation took and killed hostages, burned villages, and tried to force pitched battles, in which their superior equipment might prove effective. The characteristics of the struggle have remained the same under German occupation, with the guerrilla bands nearly always small and operating independently, and the Germans perhaps somewhat more efficient and severe in taking reprisals. Many well-known and effective guerrilla groups have only a few hundred members; the names of literally scores of band leaders are known, some of whom have perhaps only fifty men. At no time has there been any large scale military activity on either side, such as the major operations undertaken both by the Germans and the Partisans in Yugoslavia. Contact has at various times been established with Greek and Yugoslav guerrillas; and Albanian bands at present have penetrated deep into Serbian territory. It is with the Partisans and the Greek EAM rather than with Mihailovich or the EDES that the more recent association is reported, although in the days of Mihailovich's strength several Albanian leaders had dealings with him. Tito's influence is reported by observers to be strong among the left-wing Albanian leaders.

Specific Albanian guerrilla bands operating in definite areas under known leaders were reported as early as the end of 1941. One of the leaders

was Muharrem Bajraktari, a well-known officer who was once commander of the Albanian gendarmerie, got into difficulties with Zog, revolted against him, fled to Yugoslavia, returned and took a post under the Italians, and finally gave up his job to form a guerrilla band. Another leader was Major Abas Kupi, veteran guerrilla fighter and Major in Zog's gendarmerie. Still others were Myslim Peza and Baba Faja Martaneshi, the former an army officer reported hostile to Zog, and the latter the Abbot of the Bektashi Monastery (Tekke) of Martanesh.

Early in 1942 other groups of bands came into existence, some of them under the influence of the Albanian Communist Party, and led by its members. Communism in the normal sense of the word had been almost unknown in Albania, an extremely primitive country of Muslims and strongly individualist small peasant proprietors, with patriarchal authority still strong in most villages, and with no landless peasantry or industrialization. It has been alleged that two Yugoslav Communists named Dushan and Miladin, together with a Croat, a Greek, and a Frenchman, all sent by the Comintern, have been engaged in organizing the Albanian Communist Party, and that Greek EAM bands have helped this political work in the South. It is also reported that there were two very small Communist groups active in Albania as early as 1937. While all this may be true, the term Communism, as applied to Albanian guerrillas, means little more than a vivid appreciation of Russian successes, coupled with a vigorous and youthful desire to liberate Albania completely not only from enemy occupation but from those principles for which the enemy was thought to stand. If the Italians proclaimed themselves anti-Communist and anxious to save Albania from the menace of Communism, then these young patriots would call themselves Communists, if

only in order to signify their entire opposition to everything Italian. In practice no evidences have appeared that these Communist-led groups have engaged in class warfare or collectivization of any sort in those areas under their control. Even doctrinaire Communists, of whom there are a few in the guerrilla bands, apparently hope only to establish a democratic Albania in which the Communist Party shall not be outlawed, and have representatives in Parliament, while most of the men tagged with the Communist label are merely interested in agrarian reform, which almost anyone could agree is needed in Albania.

In September 1942, a conference was held at Peza, near Tirana, in which representatives of both Communist and non-Communist guerrillas participated, as well as many other Albanian patriots. It is reported that there were four Communist and about twenty-five delegates present. The conferees succeeded in merging their political differences and in forming a common front organization, first called the Fronti Nacional Clirimtar (National Liberation Front), and later renamed Levizje Nacional Clirimtare (National Liberation Movement), referred to hereafter as LNC. This is still the most effective resistance organization in Albania. Mehdi Frasheri, a distinguished Albanian who was at the time interned in Italy, was elected President of the LNC, in abasentia. He is a member of a famous family, formerly Prime Minister, and Albanian delegate to the League of Nations, a historian and author. While a proposed central committee of LNC was never established, regional committees were formed at Durrazzo, Tirana, Korca, Berat, and Elbesan. The LNC has ten regional councils, subdivided into communes of ten to fifteen villages each, and generally corresponding to the old prefectures. It has irregularly issued a paper, Bashkimi (Union).

It is least strong in the Roman Catholic areas of the extreme North. British liaison officers, who began to arrive in Albania in mid-1943, cooperate closely with it.

At the Peza Conference it was proposed that, since the left wing of the LNC was already organized politically as the Communist Party, the right wing also ought to have its political organization. This was the start of the nationalist organization, the Balli Kombetar (National Front), hereafter referred to as BK. Among its leading members are Midhat Frasheri, an elderly and somewhat ineffectual cousin of Mehdi, former Albanian minister to Greece, who has adopted Lumo Skendo as his pen name, and is librarian of the Lumo Skendo Library at Tirana, and Hassan Dosti, a guerrilla leader. Some elements in this group came slowly under the influence of extremist right wing leaders, and others, the more patriotic of the nationalists, were captured by the Italians and the Albanian quisling regime. The result has been an increasingly reactionary orientation, which expresses itself in denunciations of communism and in a hesitation to fight the Germans, much like that of Mihailovich in Yugoslavia.

The dominant influence in this movement away from opposition to the Axis and toward collaboration has been a small group of Albanians known as the Paris group, among whom Rexhep Mitrovica and Ali Klisura have been prominent. Formerly friends of one of the Italian quisling Premiers, Mustafa Kruja, they were anti-Zog, returned from exile during the Italian occupation, and reportedly drew their salaries for their years spent abroad. Although the younger members of BK oppose and resent their domination, their attitude has apparently prevailed, so that at present the BK groups are no longer connected with the LNC. Some BK bands have continued to attack the enemy,

however, although they will not cooperate with their left wing colleagues. The LNC and BK groups are now mutually hostile in some districts, relatively tolerant of each other elsewhere. There have been a few reports of actual clashes between the groups, but no large scale warfare comparable to that between Partisans and Chetniks in Yugoslavia. Some band leaders belong nominally to both groups, since they joined the BK before its divergence from the LNC: these men are usually to be found in lists of leaders claimed by both groups.

In early July 1943 an LNC conference was held at Labinot, which summarized developments since the Peza Conference of the year before. Pointing out that the Peza Conference had marked the real beginning of Albanian guerrilla unity, and that none of the various devices of the Italian Fascists and Albanian quislings (such as the formation of a Volunteer Fascist Militia, demagogic propaganda about Greater Albania, or sheer terror) had been successful, nine LNC leaders, including Abas Kupi, Myslim Peza, and Baba Faja Martaneshi, issued a manifesto attacking BK as hampering the unity and mobilization of the Albanians. Anti-Communist propaganda, says the manifesto, and the urging of Fabian tactics are alike devices of the enemy. The LNC makes a genuine desire to fight the enemy its only condition of membership; it fights for an independent and democratic Albania; it denies that it is Communist, since it favors private property and private initiative in industry and economy, and opposes radical social change; it wishes the people themselves to choose their own regime. The BK is urgently invited to rejoin the common front against the enemy.

Shortly after the issuance of this document, however, Mussolini fell, and the Italians later surrendered to the Allies. The Germans quickly

occupied Albania, and whatever inhibitions restrained the BK leaders from working with the Italians seem not to have applied to the Germans. Shortly a new political program for Albania was launched by the Germans -- a program in which many leading members of the BK have joined. The younger and somewhat less reactionary group of BK band leaders has refrained from collaboration with the Germans, but in general will not cooperate with the LNC either. This younger nationalist group also apparently wants the British and Americans to recognize Albania as an ally, and to set up a Central Committee in London, as well as to give assurances that there will be a post-war plebiscite in the Kossovo area, under Anglo-American supervision, and without Yugoslav interference. These promises will be virtually impossible to give.

The LNC meanwhile has continued the fight against the Germans, and has also begun a campaign of assassination directed against the quislings. Mustafa Kruja, former collaborationist Premier under the Italians, was attacked and wounded; Kosturi, President of a pro-German group, has been killed; and Iljas Agushi and his brother, both of whom were in Axis pay for a long time have also been "executed," the LNC assassins leaving behind a note forbidding the quislings to give them a public funeral. There is a steady flow of reports from German sources that the "Communists" are being destroyed in pitched battles by German troops and "National Albanian Forces," "specially enlisted Albanian Turkish volunteers," and the like. The Germans also claim to be using against the Albanian guerrillas some of their Don and Kuban Cossack troops which they have recently sent to the Balkans.

In mid-November the British obtained from the BK Council under Midhat Frasheri a signed agreement that they will now fight the Germans, but too much faith should probably not be put in this promise, since it may not be regarded by some BK members as binding. Many BK leaders would much prefer to fight the LNC. Meanwhile, the LNC Council has issued orders to liquidate the BK, in whose good intentions they profess themselves unable to believe. They have refused to rescind these orders, and to give the BK one last chance to fight the Germans. They thus seem determined to bring about a civil war. It is the opinion of close observers that both sides are suspicious, unintelligent, hypersensitive, bigoted, and unwilling to see reason. Both indulge freely in exaggeration, lies, and broken promises.

At present the extremely complex and difficult situation outlined above is being investigated, to enable the Allies to determine which guerrilla groups to support, and to what extent. It should be remembered that this decision in Albania is far less easy to make than the similar decision for Yugoslavia and Greece. In Yugoslavia, one of the rival groups has completely outdistanced the other, and has not only formed a large, disciplined, and well-organized army, but has created an effective civil administration for much of the country, and has actually established a Government with a good chance of keeping order. It has become clear that in Yugoslavia the Partisans are to be supported, to the exclusion of Mihailovich. In Greece, the enmity between EAM and EDES has apparently been exaggerated, and the groups are, if not reconciled, at least no longer mutually hostile. Thus the Allies can without danger support both. In Albania, however, both LNC and BK bands are numerous, small, and scattered, while allegiances apparently change frequently, and the situation remains

fluid. It is possible that, if a policy of all-out Allied support for the LNC should be adopted, the more useful members of BK would return to a common anti-German front. Certain leading BK personalities, however, as well as many other respectable Albanians, may prove to have been altogether compromised by having collaborated with the German program.

III. The German program: its development and purpose.

Since the collapse of Italy, the Germans have apparently adopted a new "soft" policy in dealing with the occupied Balkan countries. Appeasement and fine promises have replaced terror in Yugoslavia and Greece: Serbia has been guaranteed independence and additional territory; Croatia has been promised Adriatic lands taken from Italy; Montenegro has been declared independent; while the Greeks are told that Germany has always felt a deep cultural sympathy with them, has never contemplated following any course other than the complete restoration of Greek freedom, and even proposes to return the Dodecanese to the present Greek quisling government. In Albania, now occupied by the Germans for the first time, they have from the first pursued a political program skilfully integrated with this whole new policy for the Balkans, and cleverly designed to win them popular support.

Except in the South, the Albanian population had never experienced the terrors of a Nazi occupation, and the people were naturally predisposed to prefer the Germans to the Italians. The Germans, moreover, have begun to render popular decisions on the outstanding Albanian political problems. The German political program in Albania has been put into effect almost entirely by Albanians; it has come to include the most capable and honest Albanian politicians; it has abolished Italian rule; it seems to be the only program which can promise retention of Kossovo; and it is even paving the way, by traditional Albanian means, for a future monarchy.

Announcing that they had come to protect the Albanians from the enemy and from Communism, and promising that nothing would endanger Albanian independence from Italy, "who robbed you and has betrayed us," the Germans declared to the Albanians on 9 September that all they needed to do was preserve discipline, and aid in defending their coast against invasion. Local authorities, according to Berlin, declared Albanian independence on the eleventh of September, and on the fifteenth the German Minister, Neubacher, received a delegation from an Albanian National Committee, "which was set up in Albania after the capitulation of the Badoglio government." The delegates informed the Minister that the National Committee had assumed responsibility for the leadership of the Albanian nation on the basis of the independence of the Albanian State. The head of this speedily and mysteriously created National Committee was reported as Xhafer Deva (or Deveja), a notoriously pro-German Albanian from the Kossovo district. As an inhabitant of this area, he could be used by the Germans as a reminder to the Albanian people of past Axis generosity, and of territory which they presumably can hope to keep only if the Axis is victorious. There were twenty-five members of the Committee, in theory representing all Albanian political opinion, and actually including several Albanians of a high degree of integrity. Among them was allegedly Mehdi Frasheri apparently released from his internment in Italy.

From this National Committee a six-man "Provisional Albanian Executive" was then chosen, including Xhafer Deveja, but under the Presidency of Ibrahim Bicaku, a man whom the Italians had tried and failed to get as quisling Premier on a previous occasion. Two at least of the six were natives of Kossovo, and one at least of the others, Mihal Zallari, is said

to be a fanatical pro-Nazi. The Germans then recognized this group as a temporary Albanian Government. The Provisional Albanian Executive announced that on 1 October elections would be held for a National Assembly. It is by no means clear that this was done; the difficulties in the way of holding elections, on less than two weeks' notice, in a country where conditions were so chaotic would appear insurmountable.

In any case, on 18 October, the Tirana Radio announced that the National Assembly was then in session, and the names of over a hundred members were read. It is possible that many of these men were not present at all, but were simply mentioned in order to create the false impression that they were engaging in the Assembly's deliberations. Lef Nosi, a prominent member of BK, was elected President of the Assembly, which proceeded to pass a series of decrees, fundamentally altering the Albanian Constitution as established by the Italians. The Assembly announced its intention of working for a free and independent Albania; it dissolved the union of the Albanian with the Italian crown in the person of Victor Emmanuel; it revoked all laws passed after 7 April 1939, the date of the Italian occupation, including the law providing that Albania was automatically at war with all states at war with Italy. It reaffirmed the decrees of 1 September 1928, which provided that Albania was to be a monarchy, and announced that for the duration of the war Albania is to be governed by a Regency.

Finally, the Assembly chose the Regents: Mehdi Frasheri, the elderly Bektashi Liberal idealist and patriot who was once Zog's Prime Minister for a year, and who had as a man whose integrity was above question been elected President in absentia of the LNC; Fuad Dibra, a respectable Sunni Moslem, and member of BK; Lef Nosi, already President of the Assembly, a

member of the Orthodox Church and also a BK man; and Father Anton Arapi, a Roman Catholic priest, who, though he comes from Scutari, had been active in the affairs of the Kossovo region. The Tirana radio on 20 October broadcast a story to the effect that all four of these candidates had refused the office, and that hot discussions to persuade them had then taken place. Xhafer Deveja declared that the National Assembly had the power to force these men to accept the office. This indeed the Assembly then unanimously proceeded to do, not allowing Frasheri or the others to speak in protest. Lef Nosi, who was simultaneously President of the Assembly and one of its candidates for a post which he was allegedly unwilling to accept, must have been in a most difficult position. It is hard to explain why the Germans allowed an account of this extraordinary incident to be broadcast; but at any rate the four Regents were at least technically appointed.

On 6 November Berlin announced that the four Regents, together with the National Assembly, had formed a new Albanian Government with Rexhep Mitrovica as Premier and nine other members. Mitrovica, it will be remembered, is one of the "Paris group" of BK; he and several other Cabinet members are from Kossovo. The rest are either pro-German or highly respectable Albanians, like Mehmet Konitza, Minister of Foreign Affairs, formerly Minister to London, and Albanian delegate at the Peace Conference of 1919 and Balkan Union Conferences.

Thus, the Germans have at least pretended to sit by benevolently while the Albanians proceeded within two months after German occupation to give themselves a government by a series of perfectly constitutional processes: the Albanian National Committee had chosen a Provisional Executive, which chose a National Assembly, which chose a Regency and helped it form a

Cabinet. When all these moves are considered, they reveal a perfectly consistent German policy.

By encouraging the Albanians to do away methodically with every trace of Italian influence, the Germans have hoped to get the credit for releasing the Albanians from their bondage, and for having brought them independence. Never having oppressed Albanians politically themselves, the Germans could pose as liberators. The Albanians thoroughly loathed the Italians and, when, after they had themselves formally dissolved the union with Italy, Victor Emmanuel, now a cobelligerent of the Allies, continued to refer to himself as King of Albania, it was natural for them to conclude that there was at least a good chance that the Allies intended to restore Italian rule, while the Germans had given every sign of obliterating it. Not until 1 December was Victor Emmanuel forced by Allied pressure to renounce his title to the crown of Albania. By then the damage to the Allied cause had long since been done. Incidentally, the repeal of the law providing that Albania was automatically at war with any state at war with Italy, protected the Germans, against whom the Badoglio government later declared war. Had this not been repealed, legally-minded Albanians might then have considered themselves at war with Germany. Ironically, it also ended the anomaly by which Albania was at war with the United States and Britain, although neither country has ever recognized its belligerency.

The Germans have encouraged the Albanians to produce as members of the National Assembly, as Regents, and as Cabinet members, a good many of those normally anti-Fascist Albanians whom the Allies might reasonably have hoped to find on their side during a putative Allied invasion of Albania.

They have in this way destroyed the potential usefulness to the Allies of the most distinguished Albanian political figures, such as Mehdi Frasheri and Mehmet Konitza. Despite the initial unwillingness of the four Regents to take office, they did allow themselves to be persuaded, and, for example, articles (purporting to be by Mehdi Frasheri), on the future of Albania under the New Order have already appeared in the Bulgarian Press. In addition, many prominent BK figures including Lef Nosi and Premier Mitrovica have been induced to take leading roles in the Regency and Cabinet. The Germans can thus with some show of justification claim that they have acquired the support of the "respectable" Albanian resistance groups, and that only the "Communists" continue to resist them.

Along with the most distinguished democratic Albanian politicians and with the BK leaders, the German-sponsored regime includes some genuine pro-Nazis, like Zallari, and a quite disproportionate number of representatives of the Kossovo area. The majority of the population of this Yugoslav region is Albanian. As the site however, of the great Serb defeat by the Turks on 28 June 1389, which the Serbs have ever since celebrated as their national holiday, Kossovo has assumed for the Serbs a symbolic significance as the cradle of their nationalism, which makes intolerable its possession by Albanians. This renders it difficult for the Allies to demand of their Yugoslav allies a post-war plebiscite in the area. The Germans, however, who have of course no obligation to the Yugoslavs, can perfectly well afford to let the Albanians keep Kossovo. Many of the inhabitants of this region, convinced that only a German victory will permit them to remain under Albanian rule, have therefore naturally shown a willingness to collaborate with the Germans. In using Kossovari, the Germans have simply taken over and improved upon a political device

invented by the Italians, who established Kossovo Committees of various kinds in order to increase Albanian consciousness of their claims to the region.

Morecver, the Germans, in their very choice of a Council of Regency to rule Albania have demonstrated their knowledge of Albanian history and their perception of the realities. They patterned the new Regency exactly upon the previous four-man Regency which ruled the country from 1920 to 1924, and which included a Bektashi and a Sunni Moslem, an Orthodox and Roman Catholic member, so that all the faiths in the country were represented. This earlier Regency was abolished by Zog, who returned from exile with Yugoslav aid, and established first a Republic and then a monarchy. By creating a new Regency and by specifically validating the decrees of 1928, which made Albania a monarchy and Zog its king instead of its President, the Germans have tacitly left open the way for Zog's own possible return to the throne. The clear implication for pro-Zog Albanians and for Zog himself is that, if he behaves himself, he may repeat his earlier performance, and eventually come back to Albania, this time with German help, to take over the throne from the Regency according to precedent.

The Regency, however, constitutes not only a promise but a threat to Zog. The Germans have available in Bucharest not only the old Prince Wilhelm zu Wied, who was king of the Albanians for about six months in 1914, but also his son, the young Prince. Rumors have been circulated that they intend to restore either the father or the son, and while it is difficult to see why the Wieds should wish to return to Albania under Nazi-sponsorship, their record suggests that they might perfectly well do so. Certain of the older Albanian politicians have apparently retained their loyalty to the House of Wied. Whether under Zog or Wied, however, monarchy has hitherto been the customary form of government for Albanians,

and the Germans have not failed to recognize this.

It must be noted that the sweeping range and apparent success of the German program has aroused consternation and skepticism outside Albania. It is believed by some, for example, that the Germans may not really have acquired the services of Mehdi Frasheri, since certain intelligence sources maintain that he is still interned in Italy. If this is true, the Germans may simply be using his name and the names of other distinguished Albanians for purposes of confusion. This seems unlikely, however, since on 27 October a voice purporting to be that of Mehdi Frasheri, was heard in Istanbul delivering a speech over the Tirana Radio. However this may be, the German political policy has been applied with imagination, skill, and vigor, and judged by any standards, has met with a considerable measure of success. The Allies are faced with a major problem in political warfare. Unless this program is countered by an Allied program at least equally attractive to the Albanians, the Germans may consolidate their initial political and psychological gains. In this event an Allied invasion would be rendered far more costly in lives than would otherwise have been the case, while pro-American and pro-British sentiment in the Balkans can be expected to drop alarmingly. In spite of their achievements the German program has not proceeded smoothly in all respects, and they are vulnerable at many points.

IV. Political Problems Facing the Allies: The Future of Albania

Up to the present, the published Allied declarations of policy on Albania have been reassuring but somewhat perfunctory. On 10 December, 1942, Mr. Hull mentioned with appreciation the efforts of the Albanian guerrillas, declared specifically that the United States had never recognized the annexation of Albania by Italy, and referred to the Atlantic Charter, in whose principles he said, the restoration of a free Albania was inherent. A week later, Mr. Eden, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, declared that the British Government desires to see Albania free, that the Albanians would choose their own form of government and that the question of Albanian frontiers would have to be considered at the peace settlement. Five days thereafter, Mr. Molotov announced that the USSR sympathized with the guerrillas and desired Albanian independence restored. Tass referred to the American and British declaration, and expressed the opinion that these virtually simultaneous declarations by the three great powers constituted an act of great political importance which opened up new prospects to the heroic struggles of the Albanians. Except for a statement made by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons nearly a year later (4 November 1943), repeating essentially Mr. Eden's points about Albanian guerrilla bravery, Albanian independence, and Albanian frontiers, the Allies have made no further public commitments to the Albanians.

In late November 1943, Secretary Hull privately assured Charles C. Hart, President of the American Friends of Albania, that the United States was aware of the struggle of the Albanian people "to preserve the integrity and independence of their country." He added that the United States recognized in the Albanian "national will the same ideals and the same principles"

which inspire the United Nations, even though the Albanian people "have no free governmental organization abroad to symbolize their national aspirations." This statement is calculated to encourage attempts at unity among the Albanians abroad, but it still does not -- and perhaps the Allies cannot -- make any commitments on Kossovo, or on Southern Albania, which the Greeks call Northern Epirus, and to which they are laying claim.

Allied failure to announce a decision on these matters has been accompanied by some unfortunate errors in political warfare, which may have helped the German campaign. In July, 1943, General Eisenhower praised the Balkan guerrillas, but made no mention of the Albanians, who naturally felt snubbed, and were angry at the apparent lack of appreciation of their very considerable achievements. During the past summer also, Allied planes dropped over Albania leaflets printed in Greek and Serbo-Croatian. Some Albanians could not read the leaflets at all, while those who could, or who recognized the languages in which they were written, were deeply offended at being addressed in the languages of their traditional enemies, both of whose governments are pressing territorial claims against them. Already suspicious at the presence of Greece and Yugoslavia on the Allied side, many Albanians were convinced by the leaflets that the Allies support these anti-Albanian claims. The Germans have exploited the situation by assuring the Albanians that the Allies intend to partition Albania, or at least to give Kossovo to the Yugoslavs, and southern Albania to the Greeks. Moreover, BBC broadcasts have frequently praised BK leaders whom the Albanian listeners knew to be collaborating with the Germans, thus giving the impression of ignorance in Allied capitals. On other occasions, BK and LNC have been confused in official broadcasts. So much mistrust of Britain has been created by these incidents that some Albanian guerrilla leaders have directly accused the British

Liaison Officers of sending false information to London. When these errors in judgment are taken in conjunction with Victor Emmanuel's persistence until 1 December in the use of his title of King of Albania, it will be seen that Allied sins of both omission and commission have hitherto played into the hands of the enemy.

The initial step of an adequate Allied counter-program for Albania would appear to be the recognition of Albania as a member of the United Nations, with all that such a move implies. This, however, would seem to necessitate the establishment of an Albanian Government-in-Exile, to which Albanians inside the country and abroad could give their support, and whose members could, as official Albanian representatives, sign the United Nations Declaration. The possible creation of such a Government in turn at once raises the questions whether Zog is to play a role and whether he is eventually to return to Albania, and if so, under what circumstances. The Allies have long been uncertain how much support Zog commands in Albania, and the passionate partisanship of his Albanian friends and enemies abroad has not helped to carify the issue.

A man of energy and ability, Zog ruled Albania in the old Turkish tradition, despite an apparently democratic Constitution. He promulgated decree laws, dissolved Parliament at will, commanded the army, and appointed all diplomatic agents, army officers, and civilian officials above a certain salary. He was inviolable, irresponsible, and absolute. He used personal discrimination as a method of government, maintained an elaborate system of spies on his own entourage, played one high ranking official off against another, and made a farce of the system of free elections to Parliament by preparing lists of royal candidates who were always elected; he inter-

fered at will with the course of justice, so that any member of the royal circle had virtual immunity from the law; and he freely employed the weapon of political assassination. In a primitive country, where blood feuds were the rule, Zog has acquired an impressive number. His connivance for many years at Italian penetration of the country has still further discredited him.

On the other hand, Zog's attempts to increase national regard for law and order were successful if drastic. Over fourteen years his government collected 180,000 rifles from tribesmen who had previously gone armed as a matter of course; the vendetta became a survival rather than a regular custom; an effective British-organized and run gendarmerie was alone (except for Zog's own tribesmen, the Mati, and their allies, the Dibra) permitted to bear arms. The educational system of the country was considerably improved, and some progress made toward decreasing the high illiteracy rate.

In any attempt to arrive at a balanced judgment on Zog's career, it should be borne in mind that western political ideas have never penetrated his country to any great extent, and that there is some doubt whether Albania is yet capable of democratic self-government. In the past all governments have adopted authoritarian methods as an alternative to disorder. The popular will is a genuinely unknown quantity; in order to determine accurately what the Albanians think about Zog's return, the Allies would probably have to hold a plebiscite. Meanwhile, reliable observers on the spot report that about twenty-five percent of the Albanian people actively disapprove Zog's return, while about fifteen percent favor it, and the remainder are indifferent. Within the guerrilla movements, sentiment for Zog appears to cut across party lines. Abas Kupi, for instance, of the

LNC, is pro-Zog. It is quite possible, however, that BK will become the Zogist party. In the light of present uncertainty as to opinion within Albania itself, the opinion of Albanians abroad may be of considerable weight in determining policy.

The pro-Zog and anti-Zog Albanians here and in Britain, where Zog is at present residing, are already organized in pressure groups, and have engaged in periods of bitter controversy, interrupted by spasmodic efforts at reconciliation and agreement on a common front. The King himself, his Minister of Court, Mr. Sotir Martini, and a small family and court circle live handsomely upon the proceeds of a considerable treasure in gold coin which Zog brought with him out of the country. The Anglo-Albanian Association, meanwhile, active under the leadership of Sir Edward Boyle, and Mrs. Abrey Herbert (widow of a British Colonel who was once offered the crown of Albania, and whose family has continued to engage in Albanophile activities, his mother, the Countess of Carnarvon having given a library and other public institutions in Tirana) has favored Zog, but it is frequently charged that this group, which consists largely of elderly members of the British aristocracy, has little understanding of the Albanian people.

In America the pro-Zog group is headed by Zog's old enemy, Bishop Fan Noli, a distinguished intellectual now resident in Boston, who seems to feel that Zog alone can unify Albanian sentiment, and that, without Zog, the country runs the danger of being partitioned between Greece and Yugoslavia. Noli's society Vatra (the hearth) and his paper Dielli publicize Zog's cause. It has been suspected that the Bishop may have a financial interest in restoring Zog, and that he has been promised a generous pension if he would lend the King his support. He is an American citizen, and thus unable

to take part personally in Albanian politics.

Anti-Zog sentiment in the U.S. in concentrated in the Free Albanian Movement headed by Constantine Chekrezi, also a Harvard graduate and editor of Liria, rival to Dielli. This group and others favor an Albanian republic. Some protagonists of the republican idea have suggested that the Albanian government for the present should be set up along the lines of the French Committee of National Liberation, ignoring Zog. As members they have suggested Bishop Noli, whose presence in the other camp and American citizenship would probably impede his acceptance, and Mirash Ivanaj, now in Istanbul, a Catholic from Scutari, once Minister of Education and member of the Council of State under Zog, whose associations with Zog himself and with many of the corrupt members of his regime, and whose sullen and uncompromising disposition apparently make him also a poor suggestion. Mehdi and Midhat Frasheri, otherwise desirable, are apparently closely linked with the Germans. There do not appear to be many suitable Albanians available for membership in such a Committee of National Liberation.

Realizing this, many members of the Republican movement have apparently now reconciled themselves to a compromise with the pro-Zog elements. They are reluctantly prepared to concede that a Government-in-Exile which includes Zog is better than no Government at all, if it secures for Albania the longed-for recognition as one of the United Nations. They insist, however, that Zog regard himself as only an ad interim King, and that he make two crucial pledges: not to return to Albania before a plebiscite under Allied auspices has been held to determine what form of government the people prefer; and to abide by the decision of this plebiscite. Agreement on these pledges, seems as yet not to have been forthcoming from Zog or his supporters.

Negotiations on these delicate matters are now in process, and it may be hoped that Zog will soon publicly give the pledges demanded of him. If he should submit to the demands, he would not only in all probability secure for Albania a place among the United Nations, but would also have set a precedent which might well be followed by King George of Greece and King Peter of Yugoslavia. It seems certain that until Zog does in this way temporarily unite monarchists and republicans, the Allies, already embarrassed by the unrepresentative character of the Greek and Yugoslav exiled regimes, will hardly consent to the formation of an Albanian Government. Unless such a Government is established, Albania cannot well become a member of the United Nations; and until Albania is recognized as a member of the United Nations, Allied political warfare in Albania will have to operate under grave difficulties.